



The Paisano

The official newspaper of
Big Bend National Park and the
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River
Volume 26, No. 1 Spring/Summer 2005

J. Sirotnak



Off the Beaten Path

WELCOME TO BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK AND THE RIO GRANDE Wild & Scenic River! Big Bend is one of the largest and least visited of America's national parks. Over 800,000 acres await your exploration and enjoyment. From an elevation of less than 2,000 feet along the Rio Grande to nearly 8,000 feet in the Chisos Mountains, Big Bend includes massive canyons, vast desert expanses, and the entire Chisos Mountain range. Here, you can explore one of the last remaining wild corners of the United States, and experience unmatched sights, sounds, and solitude.

During the spring, the Big Bend explodes in color, as wildflowers and cacti bloom throughout the park, and people, as huge crowds descend upon the park during Spring Break. This explosion of crowd and color is really all too fleeting, and by the beginning of May, the heat of the summer has settled into the Chihuahuan Desert. Summer rains provide a later burst of desert color, and slightly cooler temperatures in July and August.

What to expect:

Spring (April & May)

Spring weather means three things: good weather for exploring, wildflower and cactus blooms, and crowds! While the biggest rush is March, April sees many visitors in the park looking for seasonal birds, the remaining blooms and getting out in the desert before temperatures get really hot. May is one of the hottest months in the Chihuahuan Desert; take plenty of water with you when you explore!

A large number of trail guides, maps, books, and other publications (including this newspaper) provide excellent information to make the most of your visit, and highlight the things that Big Bend is most famous for: The Window, Casa Grande, Santa Elena Canyon, and the Sierra del Carmen range in Mexico. While these landmarks are special, make your own experience - don't be afraid to park your car and walk over to an interesting plant or rock formation. As one writer bluntly stated, "although the old saying that 'he who travels must be prepared to take away only as much as he brings with him' applies to all our great parks, it holds true especially of Big Bend."

In this issue of the Big Bend Paisano, we explore some of the lesser known features of the park, such as the Deadhorse Mountains, and address how to properly prepare for the heat. Make the most of your visit! Use the information found in the park newspaper, a park map, or a trail guide as a starting point, don't forget to take plenty of water, and make your Big Bend experience safe and memorable.

Summer (June-August)

June is very hot; please take adequate precautions (water, sunscreen, and wide-brimmed hats) when exploring the lower elevations. The Chisos Basin is an excellent place to pitch a tent this time of year, due to cooler temperatures. July and August bring late summer rains which can often lower temperatures throughout the park and raise the level of the Rio Grande, so be aware of the risk of flash floods. This time of year the park often has few visitors, so solitude can be easier to achieve.

Visitor Information

8 What to See & Do

Find out how to make the most of your time in the park. Recommendations and suggested trip itineraries for one day, three day, or week long visits can be found here. While you may not get to see everything, this information should get you off to a good start.

9 Day Hikes

Find descriptions of many of the most popular easy and moderate hiking trails here. Most of these trails are perfect for shorter day hikes of up to several hours. A Detailed description of each trail includes length, average time required, difficulty, location, and other need-to-know information to get you started.

14 Park Map

Don't know where you are? The park map can help. This page also includes a list of useful numbers for services both in and outside the park.

Where the heck are we? - Lost in the Deadhorse Mountains

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REMEMBER:

The speed limit on all roads in the park is **45 MPH**, unless posted *slower*.

Emergencies

Call 911 or 432 477-2251 24 hours a day or contact a Park Ranger. Phones are located at visitor centers, campgrounds, camper stores and the Chisos Mountains Lodge.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Big Bend National Park

The Big Bend Paisano is published by the National Park Service and the Big Bend Natural History Association for the orientation and education of visitors to Big Bend National Park

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The National Park Service was established on August 25, 1916. . . "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife. . . and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." As conservation educators, the Division of Interpretation provides guided walks, talks, evening slide programs, workshops, and other educational activities as well as written materials such as this newspaper.



The Big Bend Natural History Association, established in 1956 as a private, non-profit organization, champions the mission of the National Park Service in facilitating popular interpretation of the scenic, scientific, and historic values of Big Bend and encourages research related to those values. The Association conducts seminars and publishes, prints, or otherwise provides books, maps, and interpretive materials on the Big Bend region. Proceeds fund exhibits, films, interpretive programs, seminars, museum activities, and research.

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Superintendent's Welcome

Welcome to YOUR Park

Welcome to Big Bend National Park and the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River, two of THE most special places administered by the National Park Service. We trust that you will have a wonderful time as you explore and experience these great parks.

Big Bend National Park is one of the more "visitor-friendly" parks in our national system of parks. Unlike many places that are enjoyed through the windshield of a car or by a fleeting visit on a tour bus, Big Bend is a place that invites you to experience the resource up close and personal. Hike the over 200 miles of trails. Float the spectacular river canyons. Put on a pack and trek through the backcountry. Mountain bike through the park on the paved or unpaved roads. Get off the beaten path and enjoy the serenity, solitude and unspoiled nature that this wild place offers.

National parks like Big Bend belong to us all, and as such we have a shared stewardship role. Please be mindful of that as you spend time in YOUR national park. Leave only footprints and take only memories. Above all be safe.

Experience Your America!

John H. King
John H. King, Superintendent



Superintendent John King

Bienvenidos

Bienvenidos al Parque Nacional Big Bend y al Natural y Escénico Río Grande, dos unidades muy especiales administrados por el Servicio de Parques Nacionales. Esperamos que tenga una visita inspirativa mientras que usted explore y goce de estos asombrosos parques.

Dentro del sistema nacional de parques, Big Bend se conoce como un parque muy atrayente para ellos que se gustan explorar la naturaleza sin las cadenas de la civilización. No como otros parques que se gocen por la vista de los parabrisas o por una visita rápida en autobús, Big Bend es un lugar que se le invita conocer las riquezas naturales y culturales en una manera íntima y profunda.

Camine sobre 300 kilómetros de sendas. Haz un paseo en canoa por espectáculos cañones ribereños. Pon una mochila y haz un viaje largo al interior. Monte en bicicleta para explorar los caminos primarios y secundarios. Sal del camino trillado y goce de la tranquilidad, la soledad, y la inmaculada naturaleza que se ofrece este lugar silvestre.

Los parques nacionales pertenecen a todos nosotros y en sí repartimos el papel de ser guardián de estos lugares especiales. Sea atento a eso durante su paseo en SU parque nacional. Deje solamente rastros, tome solamente memorias.

¡Explore su América!

John H. King
John H. King
Superintendente

Volunteers in the Park

Last year over 150 volunteers contributed 38,355 hours of service to Big Bend National Park. Some service groups come for a few days, other volunteers stay for months. Some are students, others are retirees looking for adventure during their "golden years." Most of these volunteers work in visitor centers and as campground hosts; however, volunteers also help in science and resource management, maintenance, and administration. Regardless of age or background, these folks share a desire to make a positive contribution to the preservation and management of Big Bend National Park. Volunteers are a valuable and valued part of our operation and our community.



Volunteer Spotlight



Joan and Jack Lamkin have been volunteering at Big Bend National Park for twelve years. They volunteer as interpretive rangers at Persimmon Gap Visitor Center and lead a guided walk at the site of the Homer Wilson Ranch. So far the Lamkins have contributed over 6,500 hours each. Joan and Jack are also founding members of the Friends of Big Bend. The handsome special vehicle license plates with a picture of Big Bend was Jack's idea, and it has generated revenues of over \$360,000 to date for park projects.

Volunteer Honor Roll

Join us in thanking the following individuals and organizations who have recently donated 100 or more hours in volunteer service to Big Bend:

Americorps	Diane & Gary Fable
American Hiking Society	Bud Frankenberger
Stan Amick	Steve Harper
Barbara & Bill Baldwin	Whit Hibbard
Steven Boyle	Don Janes
Dorita Brady	Mark Kirtley
Judy Brinkerhoff	Joan & Jack Lamkin
Nancy & Edwin Bump	Dennis & Mary Lou Leeder
Kay & Doug Combs	Greg Levandoski
Denise & John Curd	Terry Purvis
Nancy Daniel	Lee & Joe Pytel
John Davies	Dori & Tom Ramsay
Nancy Dickerson	Samantha Schroeder
Susie Douglas	Lauren Seidman
Samantha & Erwin Drabek	Sierra Club
Susan & Garry Esser	Vicky Summy
Ken Fields	Joseph Webb
	Scarlett & Bob Wirt



The Big Bend Natural History Association is a non-profit organization established to support the park's educational and scientific programs. BBNHA also publishes and distributes books, maps, guides, newspapers and other materials designed to enhance visitors' enjoyment and understanding of Big Bend National Park.

There's more good news in the wind for the Big Bend partners, and things are falling into line for some real improvements for visitors to the Panther Junction Visitor Center. The National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with Big Bend Natural History Association (BBNHA) and the Friends of Big Bend National Park (FBBNP), is going to remodel the visitor center at Panther Junction to add onto the building and put in new exhibits. BBNHA and FBBNP have each contributed \$50,000 to the project, and the remainder of the funds will come from the Fee Demo Fund, the 80% portion of entrance and camping fees that the park keeps for local projects. While we're at it, the restrooms at the PJVC will be brought into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. BBNHA will get a new 800 foot bookstore in the addition, and FBBNP is raising funds for new exhibits in the visitor center. That fundraising effort needs help; many of the donations of \$100,000 already raised are on a matching grant basis, and will be withdrawn if not matched.

The target is \$200,000 for completely new exhibits. Please help out if you can. Construction is scheduled to begin in August of 2005.

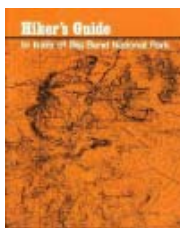
If you want to see an example of what we hope the new bookstore will look like, check out our new bookstore in the Castolon Visitor Contact Station. That store opened in January and is a prototype of how we would like all of our stores to look. Also, check out the new dual membership being offered by our two groups. For a \$100 donation to FBBNP, you will also become an annual member of BBNHA. Both groups are dedicated to helping the park maintain the exceptional level of visitor service and resource protection that exists today. Your help is much appreciated.

Mike Boren
Mike Boren, Executive Director

Featured Publications

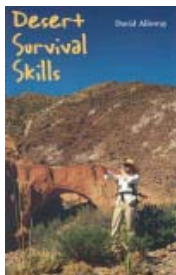
Inspired to learn more about the Big Bend? Take a bite out of our great selection of books for all ages and interests. Our bookstores offer a wealth of books, maps, checklists, and field guides carefully selected to help you enjoy your visit to Big Bend National Park.

Stop by any visitor center, or order these online at bigbendbookstore.org



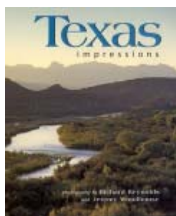
Hiker's Guide

Covers all established trails in the park, from short self-guiding nature trails to strenuous backpacking routes. Includes hikes both well-known and off the beaten path. 32 pages; black and white photographs. Revised 1998. \$1.95



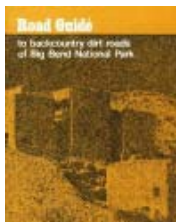
Desert Survival Skills

In simple friendly language, enlivened with humor and stories, this book provides practical, comprehensive information for short-term and long-term survival in North America's deserts. Includes instructions on survival kits, shelters, desert hazards, and first aid. 249 pages. \$24.95



Texas Impressions

With broad panoramas of East Texas; images conveying the regions rich human history; rare and elusive wildlife in the Rio Grande Valley, unusual rock formations in Big Bend National Park, and pristine beaches on the Gulf, Texas Impressions is a tribute to the diverse features that make Texas like nowhere else on earth. \$9.95

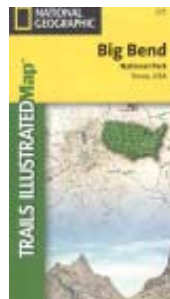


Backcountry Road Guide

Detailed mileage logs of Old Ore Road, Glenn Spring Road and River Road. Good descriptions of historic sites and scenery, human and natural history. 40 pages; black and white photographs. Updated in 2004. \$1.95

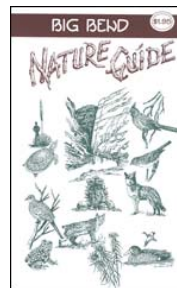
Big Bend Nature Guide

An easy visual key to over 120 common animals and plants of Big Bend National Park. Small enough to easily fit into a daypack, the Nature Guide includes illustrations and descriptions of plant and animal life sure to come in handy as you explore the park. \$1.95



Big Bend Topo Map

You've probably seen their topographic maps of other national parks, now get the one for Big Bend. Printed on both sides of tear-resistant plastic, the map covers the entire park, including the North Rosillos, plus a close-up of the Chisos Mountains area. Revised 1996. \$9.95



Seminars

Spend some quality time with an expert on Big Bend birds, tracks, black bears, dinosaurs, geology, and much more with our Natural History Seminars Program. Now in its 17th year, the immensely popular program sponsored by BBNHA continues to grow and improve.

There are still slots available for the upcoming sessions. Sign up today!

Spring & Summer 2005 Seminar Schedule

April 2 <i>Don Corrick</i>	History on Horseback
April 3 <i>Patricia Manning</i>	Chihuahuan Wildflowers
April 8 <i>Carl Frisch</i>	Big Bend Star Party
April 9-10 <i>Melissa Forsythe</i>	Backpacking for Women
April 10 <i>Don Corrick</i>	History on Horseback
April 16 <i>Gary Carver</i>	Desert Survival
April 17 <i>Dave Elkowitz</i>	Reptiles of the Trans-Pecos
April 29 - May 1 <i>Mark Flippo</i>	Birds of the Chihuahuan Desert
Sept. 18, 25 <i>Sam Richardson</i>	Lodge & Learn
Sept. 24-25 <i>Jim Hines</i>	Birding in Big Bend

Average cost for a seminar is \$50 per day with most seminars running 1-2 days. Class size is limited to 15 participants to ensure individualized instruction. Seminar participants may also take advantage of free camping in one of Big Bend's group campgrounds.

To register for a seminar or to receive a complete catalog, contact us at PO Box 196, Big Bend National Park, TX, 79834 or call 432-477-2236. You may also e-mail us at bibe_bbnha@nps.gov

Big Bend and the Border

Viewing the sun set against the Sierra del Carmen mountains is a sublime Big Bend experience, underlined by the irony that the mountains aren't a part of the National Park; in fact, they aren't even located in the United States. In addition to defining the curve that forms the Big Bend, the Rio Grande also serves as the International boundary between the United States and Mexico.

Throughout much of its history the border along the Rio Grande has often been fluid, allowing people of both countries to come and go as needed. However, the border is an artificial boundary imposed on the natural environment, and as such is subject to political and social pressures.

Increased border restrictions following the 2001 terrorist attacks have led to a number of important changes that affect the international boundary in Big Bend. The information below provides a summary of current conditions.

Border Merchants

Mexican Nationals may approach you from across the river to purchase souvenir items (walking sticks, bracelets, crafts, etc.). If you agree to look at/purchase their items and the Mexicans cross the river, they may be arrested for being in the U.S. illegally. They will be held until deported back to Mexico through Presidio (100 miles away). Mexican merchants will be arrested for illegal commercial operations which may result in a fine and/or additional incarceration while awaiting adjudication prior to deportation.

Items purchased will be considered contraband and seized by officers when encountered. Rocks, minerals, archeological items etc. cannot be purchased, imported, or possessed in the national park.

In addition, illegal trade impacts the resources of the park in a number of negative ways, including the creation of social trails, the cutting of cane along the river, erosion of riverbanks and an increased amount of garbage and contaminants along the Rio Grande watershed. Supporting this illegal activity contributes to continued damage of the natural resources along the Rio Grande, and jeopardizes the possibility of reopening these crossings in the future.

When Visiting A Border Park

Big Bend National Park shares the border with Mexico for 118 miles. This is a remote region; however, each year hundreds of people travel north through the area seeking to enter the United States. Please keep the following in mind while visiting Big Bend:

- If you see any activity which seems to be suspicious, illegal, or out of place please do not intervene. Report it to a ranger as quickly as possible.
- It is possible you could encounter an individual or small group trying to walk through the park with little or no water. Please do not stop, but instead, immediately report such occurrences to a ranger. Lack of water is a life-threatening emergency in the desert.

A visit to Big Bend is a wonderful experience to learn about the park's history and to experience a wide variety of natural history and recreation options. The park's shared border with Mexico is part of our shared landscape and a chance to experience and learn about our neighbors. A few simple steps can help keep the park safe for everyone who is here.



Crossings Remain Closed

As a result of a 2002 US Customs and Border Protection decision, there are NO authorized crossings in Big Bend National Park. *Crossing at Boquillas, Santa Elena, or other locations along the Rio Grande is prohibited.* The closest legal ports of entry are at Del Rio and Presidio, Texas.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has indicated that it will prosecute any criminal violations regarding these illegal crossings. If you re-enter the United States at any point within Big Bend National Park, you may be liable for a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment for up to one year, or both.

Please consult Park Rangers for the latest updates on this situation.

Quiet Time for Falcons

Big Bend National Park has always been a stronghold for the peregrine falcon. While these magnificent birds of prey were once facing extinction, a small population lingered among the remote canyons and mountains of Big Bend. Although making a comeback in many areas, in Texas there are only 12 nesting pairs, and the birds remain on the state's endangered species list. Last year, only six young fledged from park nests.

Falcons are known to abandon active nests at even the smallest amounts of human disturbance. To ensure quiet and disturbance-free nesting, the park has temporarily closed certain areas to all public entry. Help us protect your falcons!



Falcon Nesting Zones

February 1 - May 31

The following areas are closed to all entry:

- The Southeast Rim Trail
- Northeast Rim Trail to campsite NE-4
- Technical rock climbing on rock faces within 1/4 mile of known peregrine eyries

Visitor Center Happenings

In late 2004 a new visitor contact station in Castolon opened in the former Barracks building also containing the historic La Harmonia store, which is part of the Castolon Historic District. The facility is on the east end of the barracks building just beyond the store and features completely new exhibits, a bookstore, hands-on displays and information services. The new contact station will be staffed by park employees and volunteers 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM daily November through May.

The Panther Junction Visitor Center was constructed in 1961 and is no longer adequate, as visitation to the park has increased 400%. Planning has begun on a project to nearly double the available space in the visitor center. The expansion would occur on the eastern side of the building and would require reconstructing the existing integral public restrooms, which would be made handicap-accessible. It is hoped that construction will begin in the fall of this year.

Your entrance and campground fees help Big Bend National Park complete important projects that directly benefit you and other park visitors. The new visitor center at Castolon and the Panther Junction expansion are only two examples of your fees at work in Big Bend. Without the use of entrance fee funds, these projects would have taken much longer to complete.

Much of the funding for Big Bend and other national parks comes from American taxpayers. However, protecting this land and ensuring that you have a safe, enjoyable and educational experience costs more than this tax base provides. Therefore, the U.S. Congress determined that people who use federal lands should pay fees to offset the difference. Twenty percent of the money collected from entrance and campground fees is redistributed to units of the National Park System that do not charge fees to assist in the upkeep and upgrade of those areas. Eighty percent of the money stays in Big Bend National Park.

Surf Big Bend

Official NPS Website



Live Web-cam
Daily Weather
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Bird Sightings
Photo Gallery

...and more!

www.nps.gov/bibe

Backcountry Treasures

Ranger Dan Leavitt

What is the most commonly asked question in the visitor center, other than the ever popular “where is the bathroom?” Often, we (the NPS) are asked the question “what can we do here in an afternoon?” Though I am tempted to advise these folks to turn around and come back when they have a week, I suggest a nice drive or a short hike. The drive down to Castolon via the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive and maybe a hike out to Santa Elena Canyon can easily be fit into an afternoon. This park is so large that it is practically impossible for anyone to really see what makes Big Bend special even in a day or two. Many will attempt, a few will feel that they have succeeded, but most will be honest in saying that it cannot be done. Still, each and every visit can offer a new experience no matter how many times one might return.

Deep within the depths of Big Bend National Park are secret places hidden away for only the most willing explorers. Often these secrets puzzle the newcomers as much as the enthusiasts who have been visiting this majestic landscape for decades. The treasures come in all forms from a moist canyon tucked away in the Deadhorse mountains, rock chippings from an American Indian camp, broken glass and melting adobe walls near an abandoned home, or your favorite little hidden spring. They all share the sense of surprise, secret, and fortune that cause people to return to the Big Bend.

So then comes the next question. “How come there are so few roads and trails in Big Bend?” (which is not often asked, but one that we remember). Though we boast of approximately 200 miles of hiking trails, and over 300 miles of roads, this may only keep one person busy for just a few visits. The main roads and trails were established to ensure that visitors would not miss out on the most stunning places in this park. What would I recommend to someone who has driven the roads, hiked the trails, and floated the canyons? Take your experiences with you and hit the Big Bend backcountry off trail. The surprises that await you off trail can be just as breathtaking as a sunrise in Pine Canyon or as spectacular as the views of the Sierra Quemada from the South Rim.

Be warned that without prior knowledge or experience, the backcountry can be very miserable for some ill-prepared visitors. In an arid land baked by the sun most of the year, where scorpions hide under jagged rocks, and the spiny vegetation is relentless, serious preparations should be made. Always bring more water than you might need (we recommend one gallon per person per day), carry with you a small medical kit, map and compass, tell at least two people where you are going, and most importantly do not over-exert yourself in the hot months.

You too will see that with a bit of research, planning and experience, secrets await you around every corner in this ever-surprising landscape. Hidden among the limestone hills and volcanic peaks are wax camps, Indian shelters, spectacular vistas, moist canyons, and endless treasures that make this park so unique. There is truly no better way to visit Big Bend. Get out, be safe, and enjoy your park!



K. Jones

A Big Bend Wildlife Safari – Where To See Wildlife

Ranger Rob Dean

Big Bend is a wild place, dynamic and wide open, complete with the age-old life and death struggle of competition, survival of the fittest, a wildlife paradise. With over 650 species of vertebrates and 3600 species of insects, Big Bend is a living, breathing laboratory of biodiversity. Visitors see it in action daily, often reporting their encounters with javelinas, sighting a mother bear with cubs, or delighting in the antics of the roadrunner chasing its lizard prey. While this edition of the Paisano focuses on getting off the beaten path, for viewing wildlife it can be as easy as stepping out of the car. With a little luck, patience, and following a few tips, your wildlife viewing experience will be enhanced and you will be greatly rewarded.

Did You Know?

- In the spring of 2004, visitors reported a black bear sighting every 2.5 days while mountain lion sightings averaged 1 every 3.6 days.
- More wildlife sightings are reported from Rio Grande Village than any other location in the park.
- In 2004, 40% of all black bear sightings were in the Chisos Basin and 40% were on the road to the Basin.

If you drive, please be safe – viewing wildlife from the roadway can be hazardous. Have a passenger watch for wildlife; the driver should watch the road. The speed limit is 45 mph on most roadways and, if you must stop, please pull completely and safely off the road. Also, be aware that using bird calls, predator calls, spotlighting, or otherwise disturbing wildlife is not allowed.

Plan ahead - wildlife can be seen anywhere at any time throughout Big Bend usually unexpectedly. Check the wildlife sighting book at the Panther Junction Visitor Center. This record reports the latest visitor sightings with locations, dates, and behaviors of many of our wildlife species including mountain lions, bears, birds, and other rare or unusual animals.

Decide how you want to observe. Will you be driving or do you want to sit and watch – both have their advantages. Choose a driving route or a viewing spot that will highlight the animals you are interested in seeing. Take those things that make you comfortable – binoculars, camera, guide books, etc. If you will be outside, think about a soft seat, shade, and take water everywhere.

Timing is important. In general, wildlife can be seen unexpectedly at any time of the day and under many different conditions. Wildlife viewing activity can peak as sunset approaches; 30 minutes either side of sunset is an excellent time to be out – check the daily report for sunset times.

The Best Drives

Sunset - From Panther Junction to Fossil Bone Exhibit – 8 miles one way: great for javelinas, scaled quail, roadrunners, redtailed hawks, jack rabbits, cottontail rabbits, coyotes, grey fox, mule deer, red racers, diamondback rattlesnakes, and earless lizards.

Sunrise – Basin Road to Panther Junction – 9 miles one way: watch for Black Bear, Mountain Lion, White Tailed Deer, Rock Squirrel, Mexican Jay, Black Tailed Rattlesnakes, Ringtails, and Grey Fox.

Best Viewing Areas

Daytime - Daniels Ranch Picnic Area anytime (Rio Grande Village): watch for bobcat, javelina, roadrunner, black hawk, vermilion flycatchers, red racers, and whiptailed lizards.

Daytime/Evening – Rio Grande Village Nature Trail (boardwalk): watch for beaver, nutria, ducks, egrets, bitterns, herons, bullfrogs, softshelled turtles, bats, and water snakes.

Evening - Chisos Basin area: Sit quietly outside your room or along the Window View Loop trail to see javelina, white tailed deer, grey fox, ringtails, striped skunk, and maybe a mountain lion.

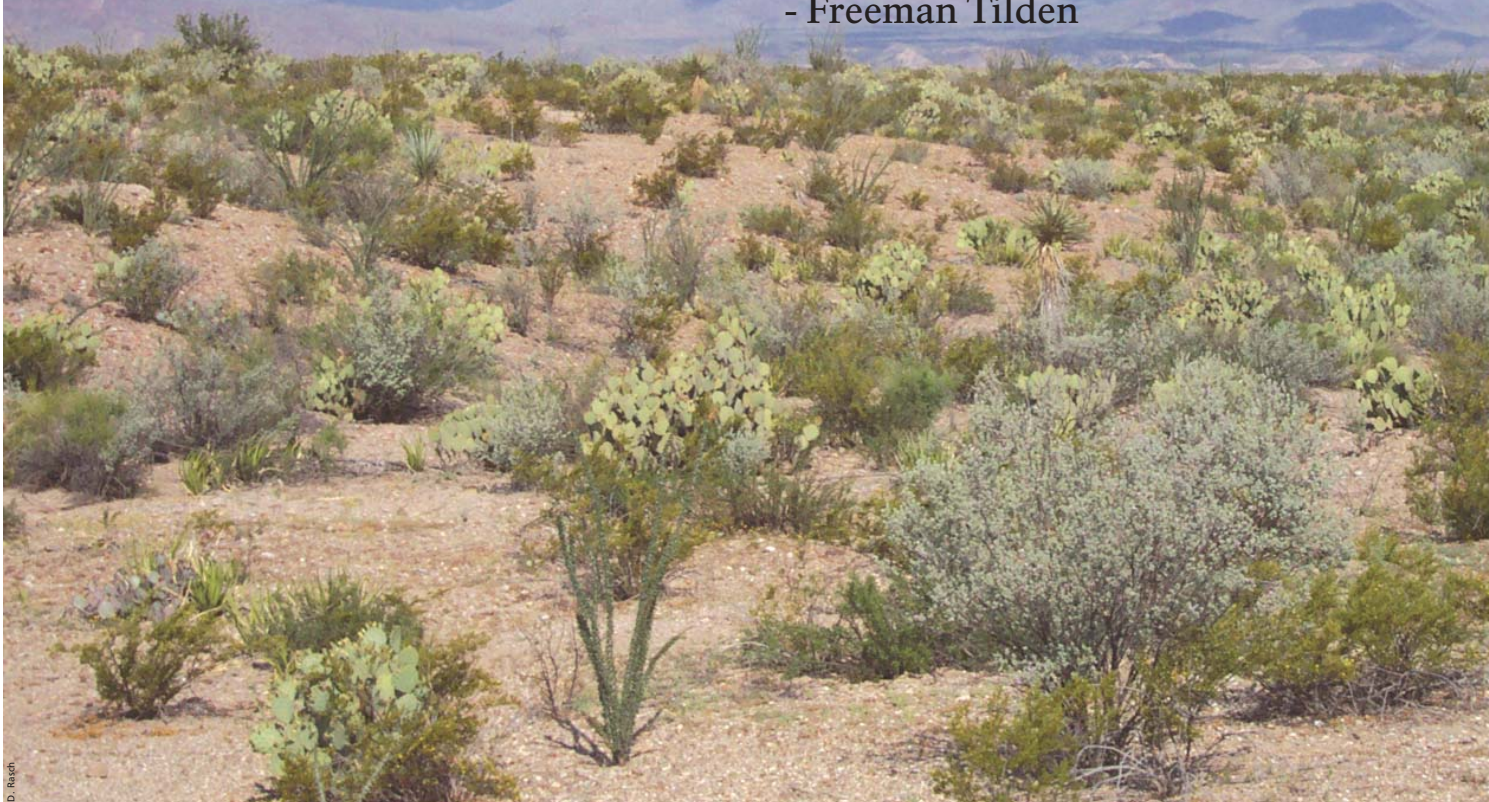
Please enjoy Big Bends wildlife, tell us your stories, show us your pictures, and have a wonderful time.



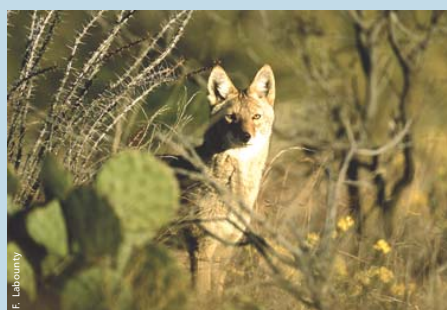
F. Labounty

It is a desert-mountain country whose qualities offer an allurements, a satisfaction of soul, only if the visitor will put himself in the right mood, and will remain long enough to know it with some intimacy. He who drives in and drives out without letting the motor cool, may see, to be sure, some most interesting natural objects, but he will not know, and can never love, Big Bend.

- Freeman Tilden



Big Bend National Park is much more than just a recreational destination. It is a sanctuary of natural and cultural resources—a living museum for all the world. Conserving this heritage is a task the National Park Service cannot accomplish alone. All of us serve a critical role in maintaining Big Bend's sanctuary for the future.



Keep wildlife wild. Human foods are not healthy for wildlife. Feeding wild animals is illegal and can cause injury or death to the animal. Wild animals can hurt you, too. Keep food in a hard-sided vehicle or food storage locker where provided.



Please respect the peace and quiet of Big Bend's unique environment and protect the subtle sounds of nature by traveling quietly.



Collecting any natural or historical feature or object is strictly prohibited. Leave the park intact for others to enjoy. If you witness any collecting activity, report it to a park ranger as soon as possible.

Hiking in the Deadhorse

Ranger Sharon Collier



Like the rumpled wrinkles on a slept-on bedspread, the Deadhorse Mountains stick up out of the flatness of the surrounding desert in a series of north-south paralleling limestone ridges. Few developed trails venture into this rugged and highly overlooked area of Big Bend National Park; few people dare to wander in this stark, rocky terrain. Walking in the Deadhorse is a hearty adventure for those who have a respectable amount of self-sufficiency, a good dose of knowledge, and an unlimited supply of common sense.

Known for extremely hot temperatures, an absolute dearth of shade, and confusing terrain, the Deadhorse Mountains seem to magnify the typical elements of a desert landscape. However, it is the complete lack of available water that keeps the area almost devoid of a human presence. With no water sources to supplement a hiker's cache, trekking in the Deadhorse is limited to the amount of water a person can carry, which generally translates to no more than four days.

Ironically, the Deadhorse Mountains, desolate and uninhabited today, were the hub of major activity prior to the establishment of Big Bend National Park. Miners, wax makers, ranchers, and the military passed through the area, leaving behind their marks on the landscape in the form of stock tanks, equipment, ore buckets, and even telephone poles. Until recently, the many deep canyons between towering ridges provided perfect routes of travel for smugglers and illegal immigrants. Today, the only inhabitants of the Deadhorse are the animals and plants that can tolerate the extreme arid summer conditions of the area and, from time to time, a backpacker or two.

But why hike in a place so remote, so isolated, so unforgiving? Reasons are endless: climb any ridge and see beyond forever; walk in a canyon and listen to rock crumble; stargaze and dream into the blackest of all night skies. Perhaps, the only reason we really need to walk in the Deadhorse is to simply be *alone*.

The Telephone Canyon, the Strawhouse, the Ore Terminal, the Ernst Basin, and the Marufo Vega trails will lead hikers into the very heart of the Deadhorse ridges. *Don't* expect to find manicured trails, strategically placed signs, and cell phone reception. *Do* prepare for rocky paths, steep drop-offs, and an extremely confusing landscape. And, above all, desist from hiking without topo maps, sufficient water and a good pair of tweezers.

For myself, a permanent park resident, the only purpose I find for the winter months is an opportunity to re-visit my favorite part of the park. A mere fifteen miles separates my front porch at my Panther Junction residence from the highest peaks of the Deadhorse, but it's really a whole world away. Even through the distance, though, I am still able to keep track of my favorite part of the park from afar. And, while I enjoy the extreme temperatures and raging gales that summer brings, I patiently wait for winter to arrive, so that I can again wander unhindered among the enormous blocks of rock and deep gorges that make up the world of the Deadhorse Mountains.

How Not to Die in the Desert

Ranger Mary Kay Manning

With over 800,000 acres of remote desert and mountains, visitors to Big Bend can wander and explore to their hearts' content. But with this freedom comes risk. Every year, park staff must rescue hikers who either underestimate the terrain and/or temperatures or overestimate their own abilities. This environment is not forgiving; hikers have died here after going just a few hours without water.

These are just a few examples of how a simple vacation turned disastrous for previous visitors:

- In June 1957, a vehicle became stuck on the River Road. After attempts to dig it out failed, the occupants decided to walk out. The temperature that day was 114 degrees. The man walked 10 miles before dying from heat stroke. The woman left the road and found a spring, where she survived for 6 days before being rescued.
- One weekend in May, a family set out on the Marufo Vega Trail, a rugged, steep, 14-mile route that is best done in the winter. They did not have a map and soon lost the trail. After hiking cross-country for several hours, they ran out of water and had to drink unfiltered water from the Rio Grande. Rangers found them attempting to walk upstream through Boquillas Canyon to reach the trailhead.
- Last June, a man became disoriented while hiking the Grapevine Hills Trail. Since the trail is fairly short (just over 2 miles round-trip), he apparently did not take any water with him. Rangers found his body the next morning less than a half-mile from the road.

Each of these incidents could have been easily prevented with just a little bit of planning. Before heading out on your own adventure, consider how you can prevent your trip from turning into a tragedy.

1. Talk to park staff. Find out about road and trail conditions, get trip advice, and buy the maps and guidebooks you need. Check the weather forecast, too.
2. Let someone know where you're going. Call family or friends at home to let them know your plans. Tell the camp hosts in the campground. Leave a note on your car stating where you're going hiking and when you expect to return.
3. Make sure your vehicle is in good condition and has a spare tire, a working jack, and other emergency equipment. Take extra water, food, and sleeping bags just in case. If you're on foot, make sure all of your hiking and camping gear is in good shape.
4. If your vehicle breaks down or gets stuck, stay with it! It is much easier for rangers to find a car on a road than a person walking through the desert.
5. Know how to signal for help. Cell phones may not work here, so don't count on being able to call out. Whistles, air horns, mirrors, and flares are all good attention-getters. While wood fires are not normally permitted in the park, they can be an effective signaling method of last resort, since the smoke can be seen for miles and will certainly get the attention of park rangers.

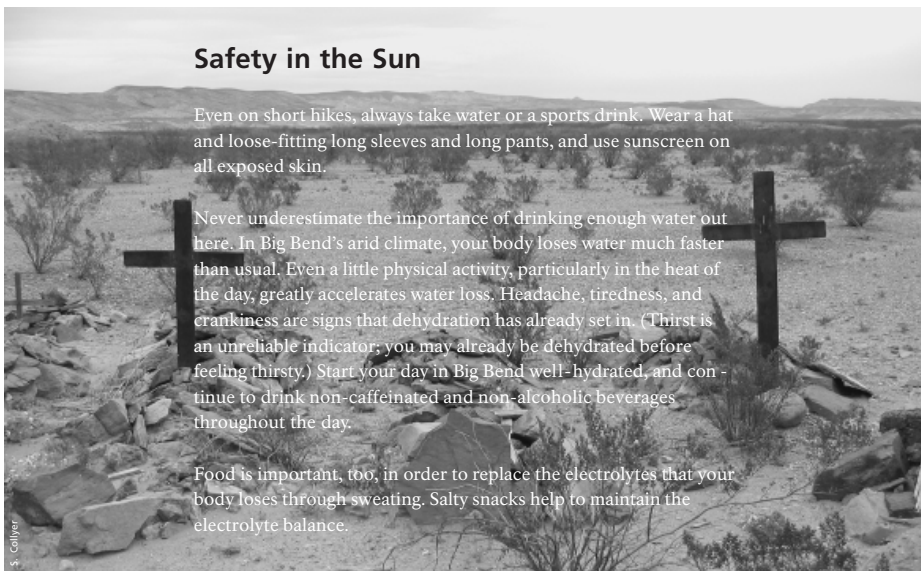
Have fun exploring Big Bend, but remember that YOU are responsible for your own safety. Plan ahead and stay alive!

Safety in the Sun

Even on short hikes, always take water or a sports drink. Wear a hat and loose-fitting long sleeves and long pants, and use sunscreen on all exposed skin.

Never underestimate the importance of drinking enough water out here. In Big Bend's arid climate, your body loses water much faster than usual. Even a little physical activity, particularly in the heat of the day, greatly accelerates water loss. Headache, tiredness, and crankiness are signs that dehydration has already set in. (Thirst is an unreliable indicator; you may already be dehydrated before feeling thirsty.) Start your day in Big Bend well-hydrated, and continue to drink non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages throughout the day.

Food is important, too, in order to replace the electrolytes that your body loses through sweating. Salty snacks help to maintain the electrolyte balance.



Now That You're Here, What Can You Do?

You've driven many miles to get here, and have finally arrived at your destination: Big Bend National Park. But now what? Now that you're here, how do you spend your time? Where should you go? What should you explore? The park is big, and often visitors have a limited amount of time to explore.



One Day



If time allows, drive to the **Chisos Mountains** to take in the spectacular mountain views. Walk the 0.3-mile self-guiding Window View Trail to get a feel for the mountain scenery.

A trip along the **Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive** will give you a taste of the Chihuahuan Desert and will lead you to the Rio Grande. There are scenic overlooks and exhibits along the way. Sotol Vista, Mule Ears Overlook and Tuff Canyon are all worthwhile stops. The short walks to the Sam Nail Ranch and Homer Wilson (Blue Creek) Ranch and a visit to the Castolon Historic District will give you a glimpse into Big Bend's past.

A highlight is the short (*1.6-mile round trip*) walk into **Santa Elena Canyon**—one of Big Bend's most scenic spots. Drive to the end of the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive to access the trailhead. You may return to the main road by returning on the Ross Maxwell Drive or on the **Maverick Road**, a 13-mile gravel road linking the Ross Maxwell Drive to the Maverick (west) Entrance. Always check on road conditions first.

Three Days



With three days to spend in the park, you can explore the major roads more thoroughly and still have time for hiking. In the Basin area, consider hiking the **Window Trail** (5 miles round trip) or the **Lost Mine Trail** (4.8 miles round trip); consult the *Hiker's Guide to Trails of Big Bend National Park*, for sale in park visitor centers, for trail descriptions.

In addition to the Basin and Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive (see suggestions for "one day") you can drive to **Rio Grande Village**, perhaps stopping at Dugout Wells along the way to walk the short Chihuahuan Desert Nature Trail. The Rio Grande Village Visitor Center offers a brief introductory slide program. Walk the **Rio Grande Village Nature Trail** which begins near site #18 in the campground. The bluff overlooking the Rio Grande at the end of the nature trail is a particularly beautiful spot at sunset.

Boquillas Canyon road will take you to several overlooks of the Rio Grande and the small village of Boquillas, Mexico. At the end of the road is the **Boquillas Canyon Trail**, which takes you to the entrance of this spectacular canyon.

One Week



With a week or more to spend in Big Bend, endless possibilities are open to you. You'll have plenty of time to explore the roads mentioned in the previous sections, and will also have time to hike or to drive some of the "**unimproved**" dirt roads. For these, you'll need a high clearance or four-wheel drive vehicle; don't forget to check at visitor centers for current road conditions. The River Road, Glenn Springs Road and Old Ore Road are some of the more popular backcountry routes. A visit to Ernst Tinaja near the south end of the Old Ore Road is a Big Bend highlight.

If you don't have high clearance or four-wheel drive, gravel roads such as Dagger Flat, Grapevine Hills and Maverick will get you "off the beaten path." Hike the Chimneys Trail, Mule Ears Trail, or Grapevine Hills Trail for a closer look at the desert environment. If you'd like to explore the Chisos Mountains, trails to Boot Canyon, Emory Peak and the South Rim offer good views of the park and take you into another world which seems far removed from the desert. There are plenty of opportunities for overnight backpacking along these trails. A free backcountry use permit is required and can be obtained at park visitor centers.

Floating the Rio Grande



If you have the time and a spirit of adventure, you may want to consider a river trip. Seeing the park's canyons from the middle of the Rio Grande is both fascinating and gratifying. There are many possibilities, from half-day floats to extended seven-day excursions. Park Rangers can recommend a trip that meets your abilities and interests. Rafting and equipment rental companies are listed on page 14.

See "Backcountry Planning" on page 13 for additional information on Big Bend river trips.

Enjoying Your Visit

No matter how limited your time in Big Bend, remember that you will enjoy the park more if you *stop your car and explore on foot*. That doesn't mean that you have to hike miles on steep grades; there are many short, easy walks and roadside exhibits where you can stretch your legs and enjoy the sights, smells and sounds of the Chihuahuan Desert.

Hiker's guides and road guides are available at book sales areas throughout the park,

and they offer more detailed information about Big Bend's trails and roads. Attending *ranger-led activities* and *evening programs* are also good ways to learn more about Big Bend; check at the visitor centers and park bulletin boards for current activities.


Remember, you will NOT be able to see everything on this trip. You will probably enjoy the park more if you choose a few spots and explore them thoroughly to get a taste of what Big Bend has to offer.


Then, come back again sometime to see the rest!



Big Bend Trails

Trail	Trailhead Location	Round Trip (mi/km)	(avg.time)	Elevation Change (ft/m)	Description
Eastside - Panther Junction and Rio Grande Village					
Boquillas Canyon	End of Boquillas Canyon Road	1.4/2.3	1 hour	40/12	Easy Begins with a short climb, then descends via a sandy path to the river. Ends near a huge sand "slide."
Chihuahuan Desert Nature Trail	Dugout Wells Picnic Area	0.5/0.8	1/2 hour	0/0	Easy A flat desert path near a cotton-wood oasis. Signs interpret Chihuahuan Desert plant life.
Dog Canyon	3.5 miles south of Persimmon Gap	5.0/8.0	2 hours	60/18	Moderate due to length. Informal hike to a prominent canyon. Requires some modest route-finding.
Grapevine Hills	Grapevine Hills Road mile 6 Usually passable to all vehicles.	2.2/3.5	1 hour	240/73	Easy Follows a sandy wash through boulder field. A short climb at the end takes you to a large balanced rock.
Hot Springs	End of Hot Springs Road Unpaved and narrow road.	0.75/1.2	1/2 hour	0/0	Easy Walk past historic buildings to the riverside hot springs. 105°F water. <i>Take a bathing suit and soak a while.</i>
Rio Grande Village Nature Trail	Rio Grande Village Campground Opposite site 18 at the near of the campground.	0.75/1.2	1/2 hour	130/40	Easy Cross a boardwalk to a great view of the river and distant mountains. Good birding and sunrise/sunset views.
The Chisos Mountains					
Basin Loop	Chisos Basin Trailhead (near the Basin Store)	1.6/2.6	1 hour	350/107	Moderate Connects the Laguna Meadow and Pinnacles Trails. Nice views of the Basin area.
Window View	Chisos Basin Trailhead (near the Basin Store)	0.3/0.5	1/4 hour	0/0	Easy Level, paved, handicapped accessible. Great sunsets and mountain views.
Lost Mine	Basin Road mile 5 (at Panther Pass)	4.4/7.7	3 hours	1100/335	Moderate but steep This trail provides excellent mountain and desert views. Go halfway for a shorter hike.
The Window	Chisos Basin Trailhead or Basin Campground	5.6/9.0	4 hours	800/244	Moderate with steep return Descends to the top of the Window pouroff. Great scenery and wildlife viewing.
Westside - Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive					
Blue Creek Ranch	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 8	0.5/0.8	1/2 hour	90/27	Easy Descends from overlook via old road to 1930s ranch buildings; connects with Blue Creek Canyon & Dodson trails.
Castolon Historic District	Castolon Historic District Ross Maxwell Drive mile 22	0.5/0.8	1/2 hour	20/6	Easy A short, self-guided walk highlighting the unique history of this border community.
Burro Mesa Pouroff	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 11	1.0/1.6	1/2 hour	60/18	Easy A flat, sandy trail up a canyon to the base of a dry pouroff. Interesting geology and desert plants.
Burro Spring	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 11	2.2/3.5	1 hour	20/6	Easy A short hike through the open desert to a spring.
Sam Nail Ranch	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 3	0.5/0.8	1/4 hour	0	Easy A loop walk through the remains of a fairly typical 1930s Big Bend area ranch.
Santa Elena Canyon	8 miles west of Castolon	1.6/2.6	1/2 hour	80/24	Easy Crosses creekbed, climbs stairs, then follows the river upstream into the mouth of the canyon.
Tuff Canyon	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 19	0.75/1.2	1 hour	70/21	Easy Balconies overlook this scenic canyon. A short trail leads into and through the canyon itself.
The Chimneys	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 13	4.8/7.7	2 hours	400/122	Moderate due to length. Flat desert trail to prominent rock formations. Look for rock art. No shade.
Mule Ears Spring	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 15	3.8/6.1	3 hours	20/6	Moderate A beautiful desert hike to a small spring. Spectacular geology and mountain/desert views.
Upper Burro Mesa Pouroff	Ross Maxwell Drive mile 6	3.6/5.8	3 hours	525/160	Moderate Requires some modest route-finding through washes and narrow gorges to top of the pouroff.

 = Self-guiding trail

 = Handicapped accessible trail

Take a Hike

FROM THE 7,832 FOOT SUMMIT OF EMORY PEAK, TO the banks of the meandering Rio Grande, visitors will find over 200 miles of hiking trails in Big Bend National Park. Trails range from strenuous primitive routes through rugged desert backcountry to short handicapped- accessible pathways. Whatever your style of hiking, you can find it in abundance in Big Bend.

On this page are descriptions of many of the most popular easy and moderate hiking trails. Most of these trails are perfect for shorter day hikes of up to several hours. For information on longer, more difficult routes, or to plan an extended backpacking trip, stop by any park visitor center. A large selection of maps and trail guides are available and park rangers can assist you in trip preparations and backcountry permits.



Hiking in the High Chisos

Featured Trail

Hiking the Emory Peak Trail

9 mile round trip (4.5 miles one-way)
2,432 foot (741 meters) elevation gain

This is the trail for those who wish to see what they can see from the top of the highest point in the Big Bend-Emory Peak. At 7,832 feet (2,387 meters) the peak is among the highest mountains in Texas, though still a thousand feet below Guadalupe Peak. However, a climb to the top affords a commanding view of the Chisos Mountains and encompass almost the entire park and far beyond.

From the Basin Trailhead, the most direct route to the peak is the Pinnacles Trail. Follow the Pinnacles Trail 3.5 miles to the top of Pinnacles Pass. The spur trail to Emory Peak cuts off from the Pinnacles Trail just past Pinnacles Pass. At the trail junction, large bear boxes are located for storage of large packs, so you can carry only what you need for the final ascent. The last 25 feet require a scramble up a sheer rock wall, but the view is superb in all directions. *Use extreme caution when climbing!* Sheer, vertigo-inducing cliffs drop off from the summit on several sides.

When considering a hike to the top of Emory Peak, please consider the following:

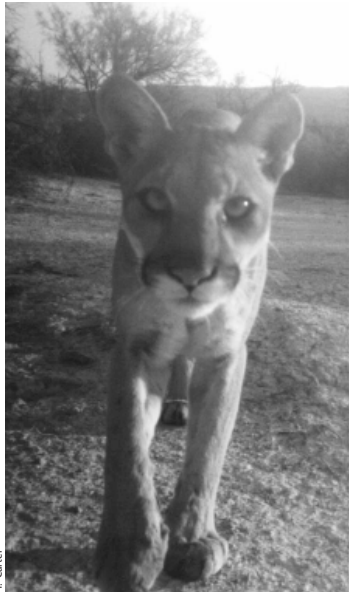
- This is a *steep* hike; allow plenty of time (5-8 hours) for the round-trip.
- As always, carry plenty of water. Allow for one gallon per person per day.
- Emory Peak is a very exposed location; avoid the peak during summer thunderstorms.
- Exercise caution when climbing to the very top of the peak.
- For a slightly longer hike, consider using the Colima Trail to connect to the Laguna Meadow Trail for a loop hike.

Mountain Lion Country

If Big Bend National Park has a symbol, it might well be the mountain lion. Solitary and secretive, this mighty creature is Big Bend's top predator, and is vital in maintaining the park's biological diversity. Everywhere you go in Big Bend, you are in the territory of at least one lion. From mountain to desert, biologists estimate that the park has a stable population of approximately two dozen lions. Within the delicate habitats of the Chihuahuan Desert, mountain lions help balance herbivores (animals that eat plants) and vegetation. Research shows that cats help keep deer and javelina within the limits of their food resources. Without lions, the complex network of life in Big Bend would certainly be changed.

Since the 1950s, there have been more than 2,700 recorded sightings of mountain lions by the visiting public within Big Bend National Park. While 90% of sightings are along park roads, observations of lions on park trails also occur. While over 90 percent of these sightings were along park roadways, encounters along trails have also occurred. Since 1984, four lion and human encounters have resulted in attacks on people. In all cases, those attacked recovered from their injuries and the aggressive lions were killed, preventing them from playing out their important natural roles. The more we know about lions, and the less we seek an encounter, the better able we will be to make life easier for them and for us.

How much do you really know about this powerful and wild cat? Mountain lions live throughout the park, including the Chisos Mountains where they prefer to use trails. Your chances of encountering an aggressive lion are remote. What can you do to minimize the consequences of an encounter? Avoid hiking alone or at dusk or dawn. Watch children closely; never let them run ahead of you.



NEVER RUN FROM A LION!

Do not crouch down; the lion has seen you long before you saw it.

Hold your ground, wave your hands, shout! If the lion behaves aggressively, throw stones.

Convince the lion that you are not prey and that you may be dangerous yourself.

If you have small children with you, pick them up and do all you can to appear large.

Report all lion sightings to a park ranger.

The lion's role is a part of the health and welfare of the entire ecosystem. Research and further human understanding of the cat's habits pave the way for conservation efforts in its behalf. As we discover more about the lion, we fear it less and appreciate it more. For many visitors, just seeing a track, or just knowing lions are out there, will be reward enough.

Black Bears

The return of black bears to Big Bend National Park is a success story for both the bears and the park. Native to the Chisos Mountains, bears disappeared from this area during the pre-park settlement era. After an absence of several decades, bears began returning to the park from Mexico in the early 1990s.

Today, wildlife biologists estimate that up to 12 black bears may live in the park. Though they prefer the wooded Chisos Mountains, bears also range along the Rio Grande and throughout the desert, particularly when drought dries up their regular water sources in the mountains.

Black bears are omnivorous. They eat large amounts of nuts, fruits, sotol and yucca hearts, insects, and smaller quantities of eggs, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, honey, and carrion. Their strong sense of smell also leads them to human foods, and they can quickly open coolers, backpacks, and trash cans when enticed by food odors.

Bears normally avoid humans, but bears that learn to get food from human sources often become aggressive in their attempts to get more "people" food. When humans disobey the rules of both the park and nature by feeding bears, it is the bears that end up paying the ultimate price. Rangers may have to kill bears that lose their fear of people and

endanger humans in their attempts to get our food. Fortunately, Big Bend has not had to kill any bears, but some national parks destroy several bears each season; we hope that through educating visitors about

proper behavior in bear country, we can avoid this tragic outcome.

Big Bend has made it easy to keep edible items away from bears. Campers at the Chisos Basin Campground, at High Chisos backpacking sites, and at some primitive roadside campsites will find bearproof storage lockers for storing all edibles. Hard-sided vehicles are also suitable for storing edible items. All dumpsters in the Chisos Mountains developed areas are bearproof, as well. And remember, a bear's definition of an "edible" is far broader than ours; lock up sunscreen, skin

lotion, toothpaste, soap, and other toiletries whose odors might attract wildlife.

There really are no problem bears- only problem people. Carelessness can kill. Don't be responsible for the death of a bear. Follow the guidelines below. Pay close attention to the food storage rules posted in the Basin campground and on your backpacking permit. Your actions affect both Big Bend's wildlife and future park visitors.

With your help, bears and humans CAN live safely together in Big Bend National Park.



A small population of black bears lives here. Please help us keep them wild by storing all food items

Don't Call Me Pig!

FOR MANY VISITORS TO BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK, SEEING A JAVELINA

(hav-uh-LEE-nuh) is a new experience. These curious creatures, also known as collared peccaries, are only found in the United States in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. They are covered with black, bristly hairs and generally weigh between 40 and 60 pounds. They usually travel in groups called bands that consist of 10-25 individuals. Peccaries have a highly developed sense of smell, but very poor vision.

Physically, javelinas resemble pigs, but in reality, they are not closely related to pigs at all and have been genetically distinct from them for millions of years. A closer look reveals several major differences between the two animals. Javelinas have 38 teeth; domestic pigs and wild boars have 44. The canine teeth of the javelina are short and straight, while those of pigs are longer and curved. Javelinas have a

scent gland that they use to mark their territory that pigs do not have. Pigs sweat to keep themselves cool, but javelinas must instead cool themselves in available water sources or by staying in the shade.



Collared peccaries live throughout Big Bend

A javelina's diet includes prickly pear cactus, grasses, mesquite beans, pinyon pine nuts, fruits, berries, and seeds. Unfortunately however, many javelinas now include human food as part of their diet. Every year we are seeing more and more campsites in the park raided by javelina. Although normally not aggressive, they can be when food is involved. Protect yourselves and the javelina by properly storing all your food inside a vehicle or in the food storage lockers provided in the campgrounds. Do not leave coolers or food boxes unattended on picnic tables or in a tent. Flatten tents when you are away from your campsite. It is important

that javelinas and all park animals eat their natural food sources to stay healthy and safe. With your help, these unique animals can continue to thrive and thrill park visitors for years to come.

Keep ALL Wildlife WILD

In the Basin Campground

- Store food, beverages, trash, toiletries, pet food, and dishes in the bearproof storage locker provided at your site.
- Keep your campsite clean. Take trash and food scraps to a dumpster.
- Dump liquids in restroom utility sinks, not on the ground.
- Ice chests and coolers are not bear-proof; store them in your vehicle.

Cyclists

- Use food storage lockers where provided.

At the lodge

- Leave nothing outside your room, on the balcony, or on the porch.

When hiking

- Never leave packs or food unattended.
- Avoid carrying odorous food and toiletries.
- Leave excess food and beverages in your trunk or food storage box
- Carry out all trash, including orange peels, cigarette butts, and left-over food.

The Night Skies

Ranger Mark Kay Manning

Few things are as relaxing as lying back at the end of a long day in Big Bend and looking up at the stars in the night sky. So find a comfortable spot and a good star chart and try to identify these patterns twinkling overhead.

In April we bid farewell to the most prominent stars of winter – Sirius and the figure of Orion the hunter— as they set in the west. Saturn should still be visible just above them, near the constellation Gemini the Twins.

The Big Dipper lies high in the northern sky. Draw a line up from the pointer stars toward the center of the sky and you'll intersect Regulus, the brightest star in Leo the Lion. Almost directly overhead in April, Leo strides west across the sky as summer progresses, disappearing below the horizon in July.

Draw a line along the Big Dipper's handle and "arc to Arcturus", the brightest star visible once Sirius sets. Arcturus is the first star seen at dusk this time of year and is directly overhead in June. Continue this line in the same direction to hit Spica, the brightest star in the constellation Virgo. Be careful, though: throughout the remainder of this year, the brightest "star" in Virgo will be the planet Jupiter.

Vega rises prominently in the east in May. This is the second brightest star visible now. Compare the colors of Vega and Arcturus – can you see a difference?

Scorpio rises in early June. This is one of the more realistic figures to trace in the stars. Look for red Antares in the upper part of the scorpion's body, plus the pair of stars at the tip of its tail that make up the "stinger." Of course, different cultures see different patterns in the same stars. For instance, instead of seeing a scorpion in this group of stars, some Indonesians see a duck sitting on a nest under a palm tree.

In July, Sagittarius the Archer becomes visible to the left of Scorpio on the southeast horizon. If you have a vivid imagination, try to pick out the pattern of a half-man, half-horse creature holding a bow and arrow aimed at Antares. Most people today settle for calling this star group "The Teapot" instead, a pattern that is far easier to pick out. The cloudy band of the Milky Way Galaxy appears to be steam rising out of the teapot's spout.

Trace the band of our galaxy all the way across the sky and you'll run across a slightly squashed "W" just above the northern horizon. The 5 bright stars in this "W" form the throne of Cassiopeia, an Ethiopian queen.

As we move into August, Vega lies directly overhead and Arcturus drops into the west. One of the easiest patterns to pick out among the stars is the Great Square of Pegasus, which rises in the east this month. A star chart can help you pick out the attached constellation Andromeda and the Andromeda Galaxy.

The stars and constellations mentioned here are the brightest and easiest to find. To learn to identify more of these celestial objects and patterns, pick up a star chart or astronomy book in a park visitor center.



Star trails across the night sky

Birdwatching

Ranger Mark Flippo



Ash-throated Flycatcher

The spring season is upon us, and with it comes the annual migration of birds through Big Bend National Park. Of the nearly 450 species on the official park checklist, almost 190 (42%) are migrants that pass through the region to breeding grounds farther north. Such diversity offers much to those who plan their vacations around the potential for viewing birds.

The annual spring migration begins in late February. Through March and April the number of migrants increases steadily until peaking in the last two weeks of April and the first week of May. In this rush of birds are many neotropical migrants returning from wintering ranges in Latin America. Most pass through, but some remain the summer to nest and raise their young. Among the expected passage migrants comes the occasional rare and accidental species that have wandered off their normal course or are pushing the extreme edge of their normal range. Last spring several unusual species showed up in the park, including a least tern at Rio Grande Village, great kiskadees at Hot Springs and Santa Elena Canyon, and a *red-faced warbler* near Boot Springs. For the birder who wishes to observe the many expected migrant and resident species, and perhaps have the chance to find that once-in-a-lifetime rarity, patience and knowing where to look are the keys.

If you are limited for time, or are here early in the spring, head to the river. Nearly 75% of all the listed species have been observed in riparian areas. Gray, common black, and zone-tailed hawks are all probable in cottonwood areas along the river during the spring. The diversity of flycatchers there is high, from confusing *Empidonax* species to the unmistakable and eye-stopping vermilion flycatcher, from subtle ash-throated and brown-crested flycatchers to noisy Cassin's, western and tropical kingbirds. The beautiful male painted bunting is most easily seen along the river, as well as the impressive hooded oriole. Whether from a trail or a canoe, birding the river will be productive.

If more time is available, visit other habitats in the park. The pinyon-oak-juniper belt (Upper Green Gulch, Lost Mine Trail, and around the Chisos Basin) is another productive habitat, particularly for acorn woodpecker, Mexican jay, and black-crested titmouse. If *Colima warbler* is a goal, then hikes to the moist woodland canyons of the high Chisos (Pine and Boot Canyons) are necessary. The grassland/shrub community along the lower slopes of the Chisos, and the lower desert areas can yield many species, including *Lucifer hummingbird*, once yuccas, sotol and agaves bloom. Working these key habitats will provide the best opportunities to see birds and build a "Big Bend List."

While you are enjoying the birds, keep in mind that many of the migrant species you may observe are members of populations in decline. You can help in several ways: tread softly in fragile habitat and don't damage water sources; don't disturb nesting birds with excessive noise or intrusive attempts at photography. Please share your observations with us, particularly of rare or accidental species. Your detailed report becomes part of the record and can be an aid to researchers. Enjoy the birds of spring, and do all that you can to ensure their return next year.

Ranger Programs

Join a park ranger for a guided hike, evening slide show, talk, or workshop on Big Bend's natural and cultural history. These free programs are offered daily. Consult the Interpretive Activities Schedule posted on visitor center and campground bulletin boards for more information.

Camper Stores

Forever Resorts Inc., operates camper stores year-round at three locations in the park: Castolon, the Chisos Basin, and Rio Grande Village. Groceries, camping supplies and souvenirs are available in all locations. The gas station at Panther Junction also has a limited selection of groceries.

Banking

There are NO banking facilities in Big Bend National Park. The nearest banking/ATM services are located in Study Butte, 26 miles west of park headquarters. Most stores accept major credit cards; however, some local services accept only cash. It is advisable to have small bills (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20) since larger bills are often difficult to change.

Camping

Trailers & RV's

All park campgrounds can accommodate trailers and RVs, but vehicle lengths have a great deal to do with safely reaching the campground and finding a suitable space.

The only hookups available in Big Bend National Park are at Rio Grande Village in the 25-site, Rio Grande Village RV Park operated by Big Bend Resorts, Inc. Although there is no size restriction, your vehicle must be equipped with water and electrical hookups as well as a three-inch sewer connection. Register at the store. No advance reservations.

Near the RV park is the 100-site Rio Grande Village Campground operated by the National Park Service. Although there are no hookups, water, flush toilets, and a dump station are available. Set in a large grove of cottonwoods, the campground is adjacent to the Rio Grande. Many of the sites are pull-throughs. Generator use is limited: from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm daily. A no-generator use area is also designated.

The 63-site Chisos Basin Campground is rugged and hilly. The sites are small and most are not suited to recreational vehicles or trailers. The road to the Basin is steep and curvy, especially at Panther Pass—the road's highest point. The road into the campground is a 15 percent grade. Trailers longer than 20 feet and RVs longer than 24 feet are not recommended.

Cottonwood Campground, near Castolon, offers pit toilets and potable water, but no hookups or dump station. *Cottonwood is a NO-generator campground.*

Big Bend's unpaved roads are generally unsuitable for RV's and trailers. Overnight camping in any primitive site requires a backcountry permit, obtained in person at park visitor centers up to 24 hours in advance.

Lodging

The Chisos Mountains Lodge, operated by Forever Resorts Inc., is located in the Chisos Basin at 5,400 feet elevation. The lodge offers a variety of rooms and cottages, plus a gift shop and dining room. For reservations, please call (432) 477-2291 or visit their website at <http://www.chisosmountainslodge.com/>

Gas Stations

Gasoline is available at two locations in the park operated by Forever Resorts Inc. The Panther Junction station offers gas, diesel, and can undertake minor repairs. The gas station at Rio Grande Village is located in the store, and also provides propane.



Big Bend is for Kids

Explore!

Big Bend's habitats range from the Chihuahuan Desert to the Rio Grande to the Chisos Mountains, and all are rich with plants, animals, and stories of human history, giving children plenty of opportunity to explore.

Kids visiting the park enjoy the exhibits and touchable map of the park at the Panther Junction Visitor Center, the Fossil Bone Exhibit area, the Hot Springs, the sand dune in Boquillas Canyon, the mountain lion exhibit at the Chisos Basin Visitor Center, and the hands-on exhibits at the Castolon Visitor Center.

Get kids involved in ranger-led programs. These include guided hikes, slide programs, bird walks, and explorations of various park features. Check the schedule at any visitor center to make sure you take advantage of all the available programs. Stop by any visitor center for further suggestions.

Hike a Trail!

Many park trails are suitable for families. Consult the listing of Easy and Moderate Hikes on page 9. For children in strollers, consider the Window View Trail, a paved ¼-mile loop trail that begins at the Chisos Basin trailhead.

Become a Junior Ranger!

Learn desert secrets, identify the parts of a cactus, and discover what javelina eat! The Big Bend Junior Ranger program is designed for kids of all ages. Through activities, games, and puzzles, kids can have fun as they learn about the park. They can also earn stickers, badges, patches, and certificates.

The Junior Ranger Activity Book costs \$2.00 and is available at all park visitor centers.



Tent Camping

The National Park Service operates campgrounds at Rio Grande Village, the Chisos Basin, and Castolon. The cost is \$10.00 per night for a site. Campsite fees can be paid in US currency, personal checks, or credit card.

Camping is also available at primitive backcountry campsites in the Chisos Mountains and along backcountry roads. High-clearance or 4-wheel drive vehicles are necessary to reach most road sites. Backcountry permits are required and can be obtained in person at park visitor centers up to 24 hours in advance.

Camping areas are often full during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, as well as during spring break in March or April.

Showers and Laundry

The only showers and laundry facilities in the park are located at the Rio Grande Village store.

Campsite Reservations

Forty-three (43) sites at Rio Grande Village campground and twenty-six (26) sites at the Chisos Basin campground are reservable from November 15th to April 15th each year. Visitors may contact ReserveUSA year round to make reservations for the period of November 15th through April 15th of each year. All remaining campsites in these two campgrounds and the entire Cottonwood campground remain on the first-come first-serve basis.

Campsite reservations may be made on-line at www.reserveusa.com, or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

Group Camping

Groups of 10 or more are eligible to reserve a spot in one of the park's Group campsites at the Rio Grande Village, Chisos Basin, and Cottonwood Campgrounds. Group sites are reservable year round and reservations may be made 360 days in advance. Reservations for Rio Grande Village and the Chisos Basin campgrounds family-type sites may be made 240 days in advance.

Developed Campgrounds at a Glance

	Elevation (ft/meters)	Sites	Nightly Fee	Facilities	Registration	Comments
Chisos Basin	5,401 / 1,646	63	\$10.00*	Flush toilets, dump station	Self-pay station	Surrounded by rocky cliffs; many hiking trails nearby
Cottonwood	2,169 / 661	31	\$10.00*	Pit toilets, <i>no generator use allowed</i>	Self-pay station	In a cottonwood grove along the river. Grassy sites. Good birding.
Rio Grande Village	1,850 / 564	100	\$10.00*	Flush toilets, dump station	Self-pay station	Largest campground; shady sites. Laundromat and showers nearby.
Rio Grande Village RV	1,850 / 564	25	\$21.00 and up	Full hookups	RGV Camper Store	Concession-operated; adjacent to the RGV store.

* \$5.00 with Golden Age or Golden Access Passport

Horses



Visitors are welcome to bring and use their horses in the park. A free stock-use permit is required and may be obtained in person at any of the park's visitor centers up to 24 hours in advance of the trip.

While horses are not permitted on paved roads or road shoulders, all gravel roads are open to horses. Cross-country travel is permitted in the park, except in the Chisos Mountains where horse use is limited to the Laguna Meadow, Southwest Rim, and Blue Creek trails. Horses are not permitted in picnic areas, on nature trails, the Santa Elena and Boquillas Canyon Trails, or the Pine Canyon Trail.

Grazing within the park is not permitted, so you must bring your own feed. Stock may be watered in the Rio Grande and at springs that are not used for domestic water supply. Be prepared to haul water for your stock as springs are unreliable, especially during winter months. Check current spring conditions at a visitor center when you arrive. All horse manure must be removed from the park, or deposited at a designated location near the NPS Horse corral at Panther Junction (ask a ranger for directions).

You may camp with your horses at many of the park's primitive road campsites. These are available on a first-come, first-served basis through a free backcountry use permit available at park visitor centers. These campsites are especially difficult to obtain during holiday periods, especially spring break. The Government Springs campsite, located 3½ miles from Panther Junction, is a primitive campsite with a corral large enough for 4-8 horses. If you plan to bring horses to the park, you may reserve this campsite up to 10 weeks in advance by calling (432) 477-1158.

Hiking & Backpacking

Big Bend National Park offers over 100 miles of hiking trails. A free permit is required for all overnight trips, and can be obtained in person only up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. Because of the unreliability of desert springs, it is difficult to plan an extended backpacking trip prior to your arrival in the park. Decide how much distance you want to cover and how much time you have. Park staff can assist you with trip planning based on your needs and current trail conditions. The Panther Junction Visitor Center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Backpacking sites in the Chisos Mountains are difficult to obtain during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, and during spring break in March and early April.

Maps and hiker's guides are available for purchase at park visitor centers. If you would like to order them in advance of your trip, call the Big Bend Natural History Association at (432) 477-2236 or visit their online internet bookstore at www.bigbendbookstore.org

The Southeast Rim Trail and a portion of the Northeast Rim Trail from the Boot Canyon/Southeast Rim junction are closed during the peregrine falcon nesting season (February 1 - May 31).



Pets are not allowed on trails or in backcountry areas.

Please leave pets at home if you plan to hike.

Weather

Elevational differences in Big Bend mean that temperatures can be vastly different in different areas of the park. The lower areas along the Rio Grande are very hot during the summer months, while the Chisos Mountains are considerably cooler. Winter weather generally occurs between November and February, with temperatures dropping dramatically as cold fronts move through the area. Between June and October thunderstorms and flash floods may occur. Bring clothing for both warm and cool weather, as well as rain gear, when visiting Big Bend any time of the year. See "how hot?" on page 15.

Floating the Rio Grande



The Rio Grande follows the southern boundary of Big Bend National Park for 118 miles. In this distance it has carved three major canyons, Santa Elena, Mariscal, and Boquillas, which have rapids varying in difficulty from Class I to Class IV. Between the canyons, the river is generally slower-paced. The Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River extends downstream beyond the park boundary for an additional 127 miles.

If you plan to take a river trip in Big Bend National Park, you may bring your own equipment, or you can hire a guide service. Four local companies (see page 14 for telephone listings) provide guide service in the park—you may reserve a trip by contacting them directly.

If you plan to use your own equipment, you must obtain a free permit at a park visitor center. Permits are issued up to 24 hours in advance of your trip, in person only. Stop by the Panther Junction Visitor Center for your permit and for current river condition information prior to your trip.

Permits for the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River may be obtained at the Persimmon Gap Visitor Center, when open; a self-permitting station is also located at Stillwell Store, 5 miles south on FM2627 on the way to La Linda, Mexico. Permits for floating Santa Elena Canyon may be obtained at the Barton Warnock Center in Lajitas. Only permits for Santa Elena Canyon may be written there. However, we encourage all parties to get their permits at a park visitor center when possible, to obtain the most up-to-date river information and conditions.

River guide booklets are available for purchase at park visitor centers. If you would like to order them in advance of your trip, call the Big Bend Natural History Association at (432) 477-2236 or visit their online internet bookstore at www.bigbendbookstore.org

Leave No Trace principles of outdoor ethics in Big Bend National Park



Plan ahead and prepare:

Big Bend is a land of extremes. Plan on high desert temperatures in the summer with little to no shade; in the winter freezing temperatures are possible in the

Chisos Mountains. Schedule your visit to avoid peak season. Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6. Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces:

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, and gravel. Protect riparian areas by camping at least 100 yards from springs, creek beds, and tinajas. Good campsites are found, not made. While on the trail, walk in single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. Keep campsites small. Focus on areas where vegetation is absent.

Dispose of Waste Properly:

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Deposit solid human waste in cat-holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 1/4 mile from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cat-hole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

Leave What You Find:

Preserve the past. Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, wildflowers and other natural objects as you find them. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Minimize Campfire Impacts:

Campfires are not allowed in Big Bend National Park. In order to cook foods you may use a backpacking stove, portable fuel stove or the barbecue grills in your campsite.

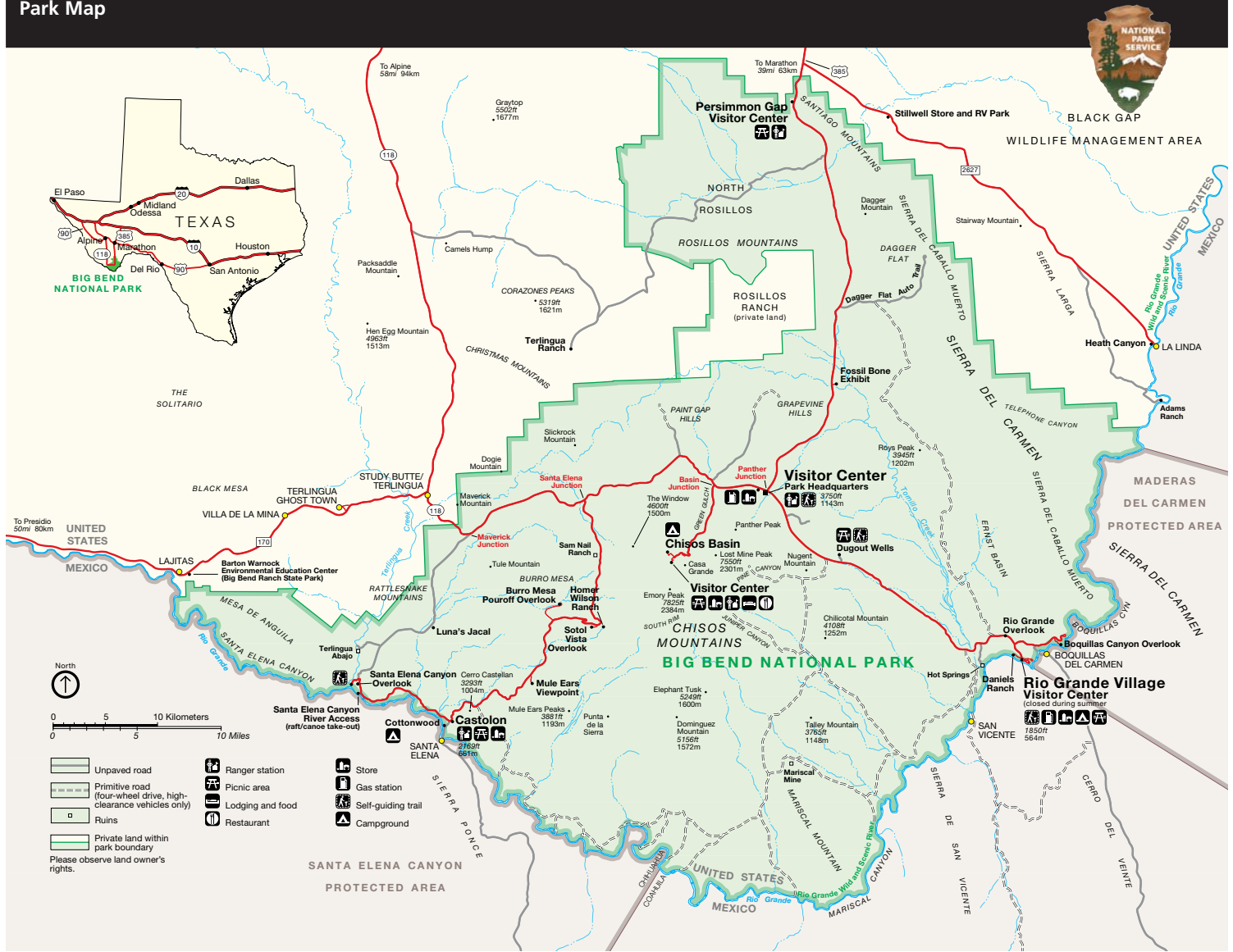
Respect Wildlife:

Observe Big Bend's wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed wild animals. Feeding wild animals damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely. Pets are not allowed in the backcountry or on trails. Pets should be on leash and under supervision at all times.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors:

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock. Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors. Let nature's sound prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Park Map



Local Services

Inside The Park (432)

EMERGENCY

911

National Park Service

General Information 477-2251

Big Bend Natural History Association

Booksales & Seminars 477-2236

Visitor Centers

Castolon Visitor Center 477-2666
Chisos Basin Visitor Center 477-2264
Panther Junction Visitor Center 477-1158
Persimmon Gap Visitor Center 477-2393
Rio Grande Village Visitor Center 477-2271

U.S. Post Office

Panther Junction 477-2238

Lodging / Restaurant

Chisos Mountains Lodge 477-2291
477-2292

Park Gasoline Service

Panther Junction (also diesel) 477-2294
Rio Grande Village 477-2293

Campground Stores

Rio Grande Village 477-2293
Chisos Basin 477-2291
Castolon 477-2222

Outside The Park (432)

Lodging

Lajitas Resort, Lajitas 877-525-4827
Big Bend Motor Inn, Study Butte 800-848-BEND
Easter Egg Valley Motel, Study Butte 371-2254
El Dorado Motel, Terlingua 371-2111
Gage Hotel, Marathon 386-4205
Heath Canyon Ranch Inn, FM 2627 376-2235
Longhorn Ranch Hotel, Hwy. 118 371-2541
Marathon Motel, Marathon 386-4241
Terlingua Ranch Resort 371-2416

Camping

Big Bend Motor Inn, Study Butte 800-848-BEND
Big Bend Ranch State Park, Lajitas 424-3327
Big Bend Travel Park, Study Butte 371-2250
Heath Canyon Ranch, FM 2627 376-2235
Longhorn Ranch, Study Butte 371-2541
Ocotillo Mesa RV Park, Study Butte 800-729-1406
Stillwell's Trailer Camp, FM 2627 376-2244
Study Butte RV Park 371-2468
Terlingua Ranch Resort 371-2416

Gas Stations & Grocery Stores

Big Bend Motor Inn (gas, diesel) 800-848-BEND
Lajitas Trading Post (gas, supplies) 424-3234
Study Butte Store (gas/diesel/groceries) 371-2231
Stillwell Store & Station (gas) 376-2244

Medical Services

Terlingua Medics 371-2356
Lajitas Infirmary 424-5111
Big Bend Regional Medical Center, Alpine 837-3447

Banks

Quicksilver Bank & ATM, Study Butte 371-2211

Kennels

Terlingua Creek Kennels (Oct-April) 371-2348
Alpine Veterinary Clinic, Alpine, Texas 837-3888
Red Wolf Inn of the Big Bend, Alpine, Texas 837-7475

Guide Services

Big Bend Touring Society, Terlingua 371-2548
Texas Jeep Expeditions 877-839-JEEP

Rio Grande Float Trip Outfitters/Rentals

Big Bend River Tours, Study Butte 800-545-4240
Desert Sports, Terlingua 888-989-6900
Rio Grande Adventures, Study Butte 800-343-1640
TX River Expeditions, Study Butte 800-839-7238

Horseback Riding

Big Bend Stables, Study Butte 800-887-4331
Lajitas Stables, Lajitas 424-3238
Spring Creek Remuda, 23 mi. south of Marathon 376-2260
Ben's Hole Creek Ranch, Terlingua 371-2954

Safety is Your Responsibility

Big Bend is unfamiliar country to most visitors yet it need not be dangerous. Whether hiking the highcountry, rafting the Rio Grande, observing wildlife, or simply driving the scenic roads of this wilderness park, let safety be your constant companion. Spend a moment reviewing these common safety concerns so that you may have an enjoyable visit.

Driving

Of the few accidental deaths in Big Bend that occur each year, most result from car accidents. While driving is a great way to see the park, it can also be dangerous, particularly if you are tired or are going too fast. Drive within the speed limit, 45 mph maximum in the park, and watch for javelina, deer, and rabbits grazing along road shoulders, especially at night. Seat belts are required at all times. Remember, too, that you share the road with bicyclists and pedestrians. Some park roads, such as the road into the Chisos Mountains Basin, are steep and winding and require extra caution. The Basin Road is not recommended for RVs over 24 feet or trailers over 20 feet. Federal regulations require that ALL occupants of a vehicle wear seats belts while in a national park. Finally, always select a designated driver before drinking alcoholic beverages.

Heat

Desert heat can kill you. Carry plenty of water (at least one gallon per person, per day) and wear a hat, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and sun screen when hiking. Springs are unreliable and often dry up for a portion of the year, despite what maps indicate. Avoid hiking during mid-day in summer; travel as wild animals do, in the early morning or late evening hours rather than during the heat of the day.

Mountain Lions

Big Bend is mountain lion country, especially the Chisos Mountains. While lion attacks are rare, three have occurred in the last twenty years. Should you encounter an aggressive mountain lion, hold your ground, wave your arms, throw stones, and shout. Never run. Keep groups together and consider hiking elsewhere with young children if you come across a special mountain lion warning sign posted at a trailhead.

Desert Wildlife

Black bears, javelinas, skunks, coyotes, and raccoons frequent Big Bend's campgrounds. Although they sometimes appear tame, all of the animals in the park are wild, and could pose a threat to your health and safety if you attempt to approach or feed them. Never feed any of Big Bend's wildlife. To prevent these creatures from becoming habituated to people, store all food, coolers, cooking utensils, and toiletries in a hard-sided vehicle, preferably in the trunk of your car. Food storage lockers are available for hikers and campers in the Chisos Mountains. Dispose of garbage properly. At the Chisos Basin Campground, throw away garbage in the special bear-proof dumpsters and trash cans provided. Remember to report all bear or lion sightings to a ranger.

Hiking

Exploring this desert and mountain country on foot requires both mental and physical preparation. Trails vary from well maintained in the Chisos to primitive and barely visible in the desert. Plan hikes within your ability. Take along a map and compass and know how to use them. Flash floods may occur following thunderstorms so avoid narrow canyons or dry washes. Stay low and avoid ridges during thunderstorms. Carry a flashlight and a first aid kit. Let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return. If you get hurt or lost, stay in one place to conserve water and energy. Signal for help; three blasts on a whistle is a well-recognized distress call. In remote areas, a large "X" marked on the ground by any means visible from the air will signify that help is needed. Carry a signal mirror. Remember to obtain a free backcountry use permit before heading out overnight.

Fire

Fire danger is always an important safety consideration in Big Bend. Wood or ground fires are not permitted in the park, and you must exercise caution in the use of gas stoves, charcoal grills, and cigarettes. During drought conditions some restrictions may apply to the use of these heat sources. Check with a ranger for the latest information about fire safety in the park.

Swimming

Hot weather makes the muddy Rio Grande look very inviting, but swimming is not recommended. Water borne micro-organisms and other waste materials can occur in the river and cause serious illness. The river can be hazardous, even in calm-looking water. Strong undercurrents, deep holes, and shallow areas with sharp rocks and large tree limbs are common and make the Rio Grande unsafe for swimming. If you do choose to swim, wear a life jacket and avoid alcohol.

Poisonous Animals

Venomous snakes, scorpions, spiders, and centipedes are all active during the warmer months. Inspect shoes and sleeping bags or bedding before use and always carry a flashlight at night. While snake bites are rare, they usually occur below the knee or elbow. Pay attention to where you walk and place your hands.

Big Bend truly is wild country. In fact, many people visit precisely because it is so remote and rugged. But remember, as you enjoy the splendor of this great wilderness area, to make safety a priority. By giving forethought to your actions you can have a safe, exciting, and rewarding vacation in Big Bend National Park.

Survive the Sun



Whether walking, backpacking, or day hiking, follow these tips to conserve your internal water reserves:

- REDUCE YOUR ACTIVITY
- FIND SHADE
- DRINK YOUR WATER
- REDUCE ALCOHOL & CAFFEINE INTAKE
- PROTECT YOUR BODY

How Hot?

PANTHER JUNCTION
elevation 3,750 feet

	Avg.High/Low	Avg.Rainfall"
January	61/35	.46
February	66/34	.34
March	77/45	.31
April	81/52	.70
May	88/59	1.50
June	94/66	1.93
July	93/68	2.09
August	91/66	2.35
September	86/62	2.12
October	79/53	2.27
November	66/42	.70
December	62/36	.57
Yearly average:	79/47	15.34"

Temperatures in the Chisos Basin vary 5-10 degrees below these readings, while daytime temperatures along the Rio Grande average 5-10 degrees warmer.



Pets in the Park

Keep your pet on a leash (or in a cage) at all times. Pets are not allowed on park trails, or anywhere off established roadways. Pets may not be left unattended in the park.

A National Park is a refuge for the animals and plants living within it. Even if your pet doesn't chase animals, dogs present the image and scent of a historical predator. The result is stress on native wildlife.

Predators such as owls, coyotes, javelina, and lions CAN and DO kill pets here. Even large dogs cannot defend themselves against such predators.

Remember, desert heat is deadly. Do NOT leave your pet alone in a vehicle. Pets are not allowed on trails, off roads, or on the river. The nearest kennel service is in Terlingua, 30 miles away.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
PO Box 129
Big Bend, TX 79834
www.nps.gov/bibe



Big Bend Natural History Association
PO Box 196
Big Bend National Park, TX 79834
www.bigbendbookstore.org

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Big Bend NP, TX
Permit # 0001

Get In On The \$30-Per-Plate Fund Raiser



Big Bend custom plate are now available for for your car, truck or motorcycle from the state of Texas and most of the cost will be used to help preserve and protect Big Bend National Park, one of the world's last great wildernesses. It may be the most fulfilling contribution you'll ever make.



PO Box 200
Big Bend National Park, TX 79834
www.bigbendfriends.org

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Join Our Family



Please accept our invitation to join the Big Bend Natural History Association

The Association's goal is to educate the public and increase their understanding and appreciation of the Big Bend Area and what it represents in terms of our historical and natural heritage. You can be an important part of this effort when you become a member.

BBNHA was founded in 1956 to aid educational, historical, and scientific programs for the benefit of Big Bend and its visitors.

Your Benefits as a Member

- A 15% discount on items sold by BBNHA
- A 10% discount on most seminars
- A subscription to *The Big Bend Paisano*
- Current Big Bend calendar
- Discounts at many other association bookstores in visitor centers at other national park sites
- Opportunity to support scientific, educational, and historical programs in Big Bend

NEW - Do more with your dues!

Purchase a dual annual membership in both BBNHA and the Friends of Big Bend National Park for only \$100.

Past and present projects include:

- Operate book sales outlets in Big Bend National Park and Amistad National Recreation Area
- Publish trail guides and brochures and assist with the publication of *The Big Bend Paisano*
- Sponsor an on-going Seminar program
- Provide annual grants for research projects and administer grants and gifts received for the park
- Support the park's volunteer, Junior Ranger, and educational outreach.

Yes!

Please enroll me as a member of BBNHA

ANNUAL DUES

___ Individual (\$50) ___ Associate (\$100)
___ Dual Membership (BBNHA/FBBNP) (\$100)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

___ Individual or Family (\$500)
___ Corporate (\$1,000)
___ Benefactor (\$2,500)

___ New Member ___ Renewal

Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____
Address _____
City _____ State/ZIP _____

Make check payable to BBNHA or charge to:

___ Visa ___ Mastercard ___ Discover
Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

DETACH AND MAIL TO:

BBNHA, P.O. Box 196
Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834
Telephone: (432) 477-2236
e-mail: bibe_bbnha@nps.gov